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COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

Volume 4, Number 1 **June 1994**

Small Businesses Join in New War Against Poverty

Photos by Chris Brown

United Market owner introducing discount purchase program to support organizing efforts in low-income communities.

The original "War on Poverty" was the centerpiece of Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" in the late 1960s, claimed to be an ambitious federal plan to identify and phase out the nation's poverty. New federal government programs were designed to funnel government tax dollars into the hands of poverty agencies and private corporations that took salaries off the top. In theory, they would then hire the poor at living wages and provide temporary relief to a population sick and tired of being sick and tired.

Locally, programs like "Model Cities" came into West Oakland with promises of dozens of new or renovated houses. No new houses were built, but salaries and contracts were paid off.

This success — or lack of success, depending on which side of the economic fence you were sitting — left target communities devastated, deserted and dying, and their residents struggling for day-to-day survival.

The real fight against poverty

The real fight against poverty takes a different approach. It is not initiated by the government, and it will not wait for prosperity to "trickle down" to us through corporate wealth.

The new war involves a quiet, grassroots approach that embraces both the Black Panther Party Ten Point program for returning power to the people, and the African principle of cooperative economics within the neighborhood. This movement believes strongly that the only way to effectively combat the blight of economic powerlessness that has decimated the African-American and other poor and minority communities at large is to work from the inside out, taking back control of our lives, person by person, neighborhood by neighborhood, community by community. It calls for the community to take con-

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NAFTA Passage Starts New Mexican Revolution

Zapatista National Liberation Front guerrillas in Chiapas, Mexico earlier this year.

By Francisco Avilés

The people of Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, said "*Enough!*" on January 1. Armed Mexican guerrillas took control of San Cristobal de las Casas on New Year's Day, declaring the Mexican government illegal, and in violation of its own Constitution. The rebels still hold significant areas of the state, excluding the government from them. They won such widespread support in the country that the government was forced to negotiate with them, and says it is ready to talk further.

In a communiqué issued by these brave and determined people they quote the Mexican Constitution: "*We go to our Constitution, to apply Article 39 which*

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Editorial

Anatomy of a Government Raid on a Harlem Mosque

Economic Class Conflict, Race, Religion, and Property

The media firestorm licensing and condoning the recent raid on Muhammad's Harlem Mosque presents a clinical study in the use of racialist and religious hysteria to divide, conquer, justify, and camouflage both the installation of machinery for and exploitation of workers of all races and religions; while discrediting potential resistance, consolidating political forces with payoffs, thereby creating false images of economic progress.

What happened, January 14, 1994, in the Nation of Islam's (NOI) Harlem Mosque, at 2033 Fifth Avenue, is part of the same process currently being played out at a higher level in the former Yugoslavian countries of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia-Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro were separate countries), Vojvodina and Kosovo.

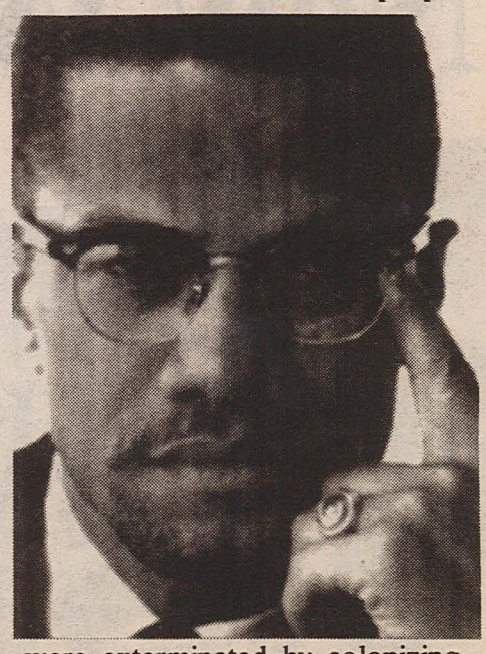
To understand the forces which triggered the raid, and the before-and-after-raid media firestorm of anti-Nation of Islam anti-semitic allegations from almost every quarter, including the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), requires understanding the purpose, nature, historical development and use of racialist-religious prejudice and persecution as instruments of economic class oppression.

History verifies that racialist and religious bigotry has always provided justification for one class-grouping to forcibly seize ownership or control of the persons or property of another, and subject them to actual and threatened use of capital, corporal and other punishments to coerce labor for enrichment of an elite few. It makes no difference whether labor is exploited in the cotton fields, concentration or extermination camps, prisons, or in so-called empowerment zones disguised as job training at ultra-low poverty level wages.

Race, Religion, Property, Indian Slavery, Land, and Genocide

The history of the so-called Indian and African Americans, Jewish people under Hitler, and of the Civil Rights movement all illustrate the relationship of property rights to economic class conflict, racialist-religious prejudice and persecution. Depiction of so-called American Indians as redskinned, subhuman heathens, together with church doctrine, holding until the early sixteenth century, that Indians had no souls, justified enslavement of Native American peoples as property themselves and of their land, labor, personal and real estates as property.

In less than a century, 95 percent of the Native American people



were exterminated by colonizing European powers through brutal enslavement, massacre, and germ warfare, including being deliberately contaminated with smallpox, the AIDS of the day. El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X) pointed out that, as far as we know, the colonization of North America was the first instance in history where

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A Message to Our Readers

Editor Melvin Dickson announced today that his work would be supplemented by revolving National Editorial Staff which "would begin to teach the practices of programmed participation in the development of a genuine free press that we have been representing since late last year, one that comes from people, where people learn by doing the whole job, while working at the job."

For people who don't have the time and money to burn away in a classroom, Dickson said, "there is the talent and ability, and above all the desire out there, to fill 100s of newspapers with the rare commodity people find at the premium today — real news coming from working class and oppressed communities.

"There are periodical non-establishment publications throughout the nation that furnish a great start in that direction. That's why we originally entered the National Press Collective training effort, promulgated by Womens Press Collective and other alternative press collectives associated with this, who have been working diligently at training members of oppressed communities, not just to learn publishing, but when the time comes, to teach it to others.

"What National Press Collective is doing fell so much in line with some of the speeches Dr. Huey P. Newton made, that we were unable to pass it by without participation."

Dickson will serve as part of a rotating editorship program he will lead, while other sources in training and with the proper credentials take up portions of the residential discipline it takes to bring forth a progressive periodical publication.

During the time, Dickson will fit in a series of classes for himself in pursuit of a lifetime of upper division qualifications to add to his present vitae in his present vocation. He will continue to participate and advise depending upon program necessity. The object of this is to take five or six new trainees and turn them out as successfully trained editors and publishers, where only one; he himself, existed before.

Dickson added, "this apprenticeship practice exists at every level inside *Commemorator*, from editor to printer's assistant.

Anyone who wants to learn a section of the trade or profession should contact *Commemorator* in regard to training in these vocations."

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COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

"SERVING ALL OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES"
Volume 4, Number 1 June 1994 Oakland, California

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Letters to the Editor

Photo by Lily Earl Smith.

"Restructuring" Hurts Both Patients and Health Care Workers

Dear Editor,

I am a nurse at Childrens Hospital Oakland and a member of the California Nurses Association. I came across the December issue of your newsletter outside of the Albany Safeway a few months ago.

I bought a copy because of the lead stories on health care and especially the article by Sowande Akintunde on Kaiser's Gateways project. I was impressed with the article—Akintunde explained very clearly the implications of restructuring for both patients and health care workers. CNA has been working to organize and educate our members about how restructuring threatens our jobs and our ability to deliver safe nursing care.

For me, I see that TB is on the rise, RNs are being laid off, we are being told by the media that we can't afford national health care, and industry-wide profits are at an all time high. Something's very wrong with this picture, and the leadership of CNA has decided to take the industry on.

CNA is holding a rally May 12 in downtown San Francisco to begin our campaign to bring this issue to the public. We hope to link up with other labor unions and the community organizations that should be our natural allies in the struggle. The target of the rally will be APM, a management consulting firm specializing in hospital downsizing. Enclosed is information about the rally and a copy of our facility newsletter, which ran a story on APM.

We invite members of the Commemoration Committee to join us on the 12th. Please call at 510-524-8158 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Debbie Bayer, RN
CNA
Oakland, CA

Why Is Geronimo Pratt Still In Prison?

Dear Editor,

Why is this decorated war veteran, falsely accused and convicted of a crime he did not commit, unable to get a re-examination of his case?

What makes the criminal justice system so unwilling to permit a new trial? Was Geronimo Pratt the victim of an FBI-assisted frame-up? To be sure. The Director of the FBI developed a mental condition, an acute homosexual panic concerning the Black Panther Party, in the year 1968. Never a friend of color, this unstable police bureaucrat ordered the BPP "neutralized."

We know today that this campaign of anti-black terror is why Geronimo Pratt was, years after the event, taken-up, tried and convicted on false evidence, constructed by lying police, corrupt criminalists, and political bias.

Hoover is dead nearly 20 years. The police who fabricated the various parts of the case are gone, retired, dead. Julius Butler, race traitor, is an old man who has to live with his lies. No useful purpose could possibly be served by maintaining the frame-up of "G."

So why is Geronimo Pratt in prison? Can the criminal justice system be so weak as to be unable to admit that out of the millions of criminal cases they have processed in the last forty years that there never was a frame-up, a false case for political reasons?

Not one?

Or is somebody being protected, and if so, who might that be? Who has the clout, the political power both then and now to keep the frame-up intact, and to keep Geronimo Pratt in prison?

What we are looking for is a young man in the beginning, 1968, probably associated with Governor Reagan who stayed in a position of power as Reagan rose to the Presidency and kept clout during the Bush years. He, for it is doubtful that it would be a woman, would have had to have been a man of executive power both then and now.

Who would that be? I nominate Edwin Meese III, the "Wonder of Wedtech," the man who ordered the shoot to kill at People's Park, the tear gas on the students in '68, the former Attorney General of the United States.

If I have slandered the man, I welcome the opportunity to take his deposition, and his answers to the interrogators.

Maybe the question isn't why Geronimo is in prison, but rather why "Little Eddie Meese" is out.

Free Geronimo Pratt!
Doc Stanly

The Best To You

Dear Editor,

I send you absolute encouragement of the most resolute manner in the publication of the *Commemorator*. It rings with the passion and conviction of political and economic truth illuminating, inspiring and galvanizing a people who are held back and beaten down, deceived and misled. Your devotion and incisive determination is applauded. Thank you. Read these words and believe them if you ever lose heart or get disgusted with the multitudes of hassles of life. The best to you, brothers and sisters, who carry a baton so many thought was dropped.

Sincerely,
August Hardy Williams
New York

Four Years and No Outside Mail

Dear Editor,

Please accept my utmost respect!

I just obtained your address from an old newspaper of yours. My reason for this correspondence is to obtain a subscription of your paper.

However, I am an indigent inmate. If there is any way I can obtain your newspaper, I would be very thankful for your help concerning this matter.

I will be looking for a reply if only one line. Just to let me know you have received my letter.

There is so much I would like to tell you. But the eye is looking.

I would also like to be placed on your mailing list if you have one.

Also if there is a pen pal listing I would like to be placed on that as well.

I've been here going on four years and no outside mail. SMILE. So you see I really would enjoy that. Well, please take care and keep up the good work.

James Hatley

Commemorator Replies:

Let me say first that you are now on our mailing list and will receive each and every subscription of the Commemorator *starting this month.*

The Commemorator *staff also welcomes your letters, comments and articles, art, or other materials you would like to submit to the paper.*

It is our sincere wish to open communications up between the oppressed community and its members on the inside.

It is true that a significant portion of our community is incarcerated or in one way or another under the control and supervision of the U.S. criminal justice system.

Programs like Operation Zero Tolerance, where police target our lowest income neighborhoods for special attention, like curfews, increased police presence and harassment for every conceivable infraction on the books, from jaywalking to vagrancy, are on the rise. Special laws are being passed against the condition of poverty, e.g., begging, homelessness, leaving kids at home alone while you work to feed them, lack of auto insurance, inability to pay child support, inability to pay back government loans, etc.

That fact is not an indictment of our people, but of the system. It is the system which oppresses a population and then lies in wait, as lives are shaped by that oppression, for them to strike out at their oppressors, for them to rebel against that oppression or for them to succumb to their oppression and begin to struggle to resemble their oppressors and become oppressors themselves, at home, on the streets, or at work.

It is the system that then arrests and incarcerates us, it's product, products of it's oppression (its oppressive political system, and economic system held together by its oppressive educational system, oppressive media, oppressive religions, oppressive laws, etc.)

Please don't bother writing me about your crime, or why you are in there. If you are poor and a person of color and you were born and raised in this country, I know why you are in there and, once more, I know 10 brothers like you, who, if something isn't done soon, by me and you, together, will be in there, too.

With our correspondence we hope to bring you closer to members of our communities and, like Huey P. Newton once said, they can only imprison part of the community, but the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Continuation from the last issue

When Justice is Incidental

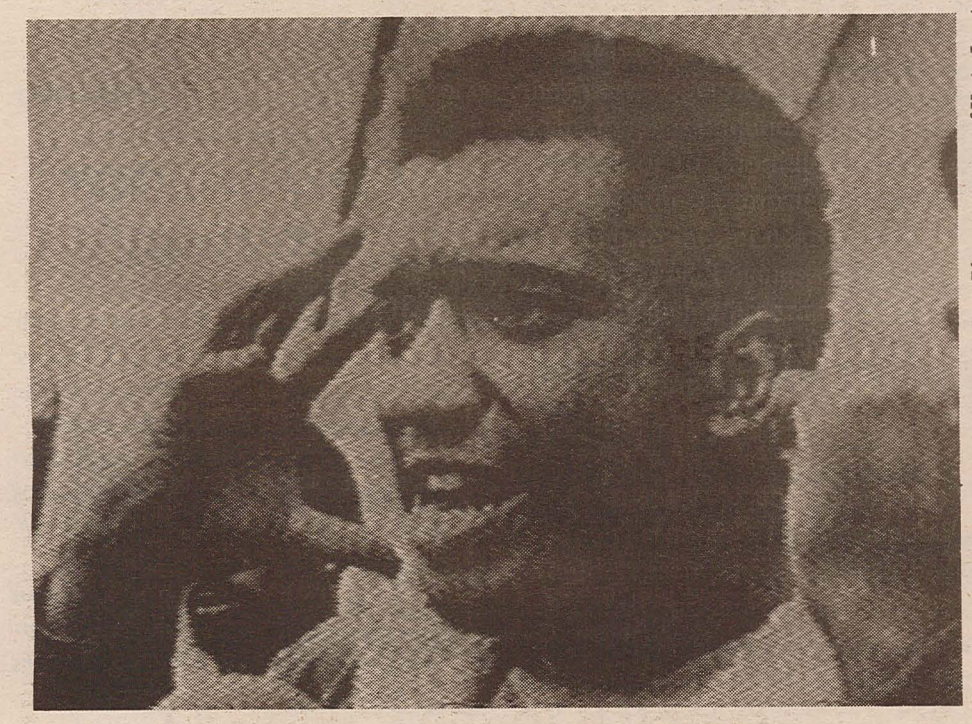

Photo courtesy of Verin Lewis

Illinois Black Panther Party Chair Fred Hampton

By Verin Lewis

In January of 1969, Chicago city officials announced a crack down on gangs. A *Chicago Daily News* headline read "KILLING MUST END - DALEY - WAR ON STREET GANGS." Edward V. Hanrahan, Cook County District Attorney, made a statement to the news media on the issues of street gangs, "The energy of youth properly directed could be a tremendous betterment, could lead to a tremendous betterment of our city and these individuals' progress themselves. I'm complaining about the misdirection. I'm complaining about the fact that 620 out of 693 shooting victims are black themselves. I think that's a tragedy. That is where black genocide is occurring here." His statements reflected the attitude of Mayor Daley's political machine.

The Chicago police expand "anti-gang campaign" to include Black Panther Party

In an attempt to destroy the leadership of the Black Panther Party in Chicago, Fred Hampton was set up and sent to prison for two to five years on charges of stealing $71.00 worth of ice cream bars. He was named the "ice-cream bandit" on the streets, as a reflection of the absurdity of the crimes he is alleged to have committed. The press used it as an excuse to discredit Fred. From the point of his arrest he was referred to as a "known felon."

While Hampton was in prison the Black Panther Party headquarters in Chicago were raided by the police and the FBI. It became clear to Hampton that there was a concise effort underway by the FBI and the police to destroy the Black Panther Party. An FBI agent was photographed at the scene. The raid turned into a shoot out. Five policemen and three Panthers were wounded in the raid. The police deliberately set fire to the third floor of the building, containing the Black Panther Party headquarters. The only things of value on this floor were the boxes of cereal stored there for the Breakfast for Children program.

After the raid, Bobby Seale was contacted in Oakland. His directive was to "open the office right-back-up." With community help the office was cleaned up and repainted and opened again. The police were unable to put the Black Panther Party out of business in Chicago.

In the form of a report, later made public by the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover declared the Black Panther Party the "number one threat to the security of the U.S." Police throughout the country were given the green light to go after the Black Panther Party.

Upon being released from prison, Hampton was a keynote speaker at a meeting of Panthers, white radicals and community people at People's Church.

Attacks on Panthers by the Chicago police gather momentum

In early September, Larry Robertson, the Chicago chapter Breakfast for Children coordinator, was murdered. The Chicago Seven trial began. This trial should have been known as the Chicago Eight as Bobby Seale was the eighth and only black defendant. Fred Hampton acted as Bobby Seale's liaison with the outside world, visiting him every day to convey messages between Seale and the Black Panther Party. Unable to speak with Bobby Seale, they used the sign language of the hearing-impaired to communicate with him. Later, Fred Hampton taught this means of communication to Bobby Seale's first wife so that she might carry on contact with Bobby Seale in the courtroom.

Continued on page 14

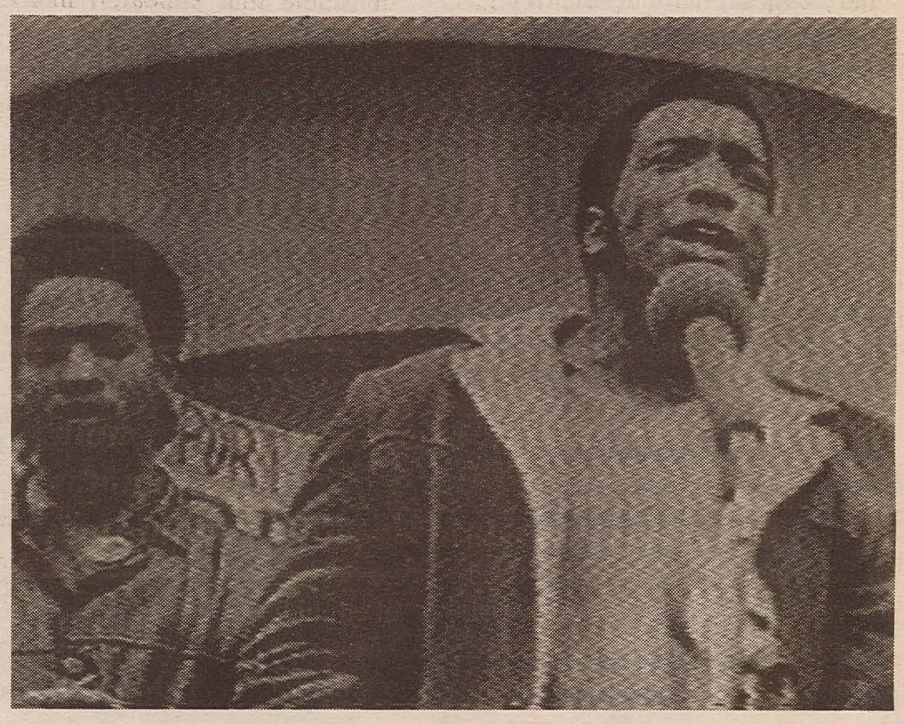

Photo courtesy of Verin Lewis

Hampton was targeted by the FBI, because of his leadership role in the NAACP and his activities in SNCC.

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Haiti: The Repressive Machine Continues its Infernal Rampage

Against the backdrop of maneuvers, both at the national and international level, to delay the resolution of the crisis resulting from the coup d'état of September 29, 1991, the hope that the terror campaign afflicting the whole country would stop is fading.

The fascist character of the regime put in place by the coup is being confirmed day by day and more and more by arbitrary arrests, summary executions, disappearances, torture, and massacres that are multiplying. The frequency of break-ins into private homes by armed individuals, robberies, rapes, etc, is such as to discourage those attempting to keep track of such incidents. As an extension of the political violence put to work by the military and its paramilitary affiliates, bandits continue to arm themselves and to perfect their methods. This *banditism* is political in its methods as well as its impact: it is used as a means of financing the paramilitary groups used by the regime for political repression, and to create a psychosis of fear in all citizens, without distinction, that will shape their attitude toward the armed representatives of the regime in place. It is co-optation by fear.

Currently the repression targets women and children repeatedly. The last incident involved Macilia Mésadieux, a young student of the l'Ecole Normale supérieure de l'Universite d'Etat who was raped, tortured, and executed in her home by an armed group in the night of March 4-5. At 5:30 AM on the same date, Jacques Dorcéan, an engineer, was arrested without a warrant by the military at his home in Thomassin. In violation of legal procedure, his case has not as yet been brought to a tribunal.

It is actually impossible to determine how many young people were arrested as a result of the police sweeps that took place in recent days, just as it is difficult to obtain precise information on the repression that hit the department of the South, especially in Platon, Chantal, Lepretre, Port-Salut, and Les Cayes, and the department of the West, in Malike, and the Cul-de-Sac plain.

The scope and gravity of the repression put in place by the military, although well advertised abroad, remains without a tangible response. It would appear that the international community has chosen pro-forma denunciation while giving its tacit approval to the regime actually in place.

It is therefore imperative that civil society develop appropriate means in order to provide multifaceted assistance to the victims of this repression.

Translation by Max Blanchet of article that appeared in *Perspective Haiti*, No 24, from March 15 till 31, 1994, Published by **CRESFED**, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Printed courtesy of
Oakland Community United
Church of Christ
Rev. Lorenzo Carlyle, Pastor
(Article provided by Pierre Labossiere)

COLONIALISM IS ALIVE AND KICKING

There are many remnants of the colonial process which are still with us today.
Some, I'm sure, I don't know about, yet;
but fear and laziness, there is no question about them. They're as essential to the colonized mentalities
- the oppressor and the oppressed -
as water is to ice.

—Melvin Dickson

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CHIROPRACTIC FAMILY PRACTICE

Nathan Cosby Killed in Illegal Police Action

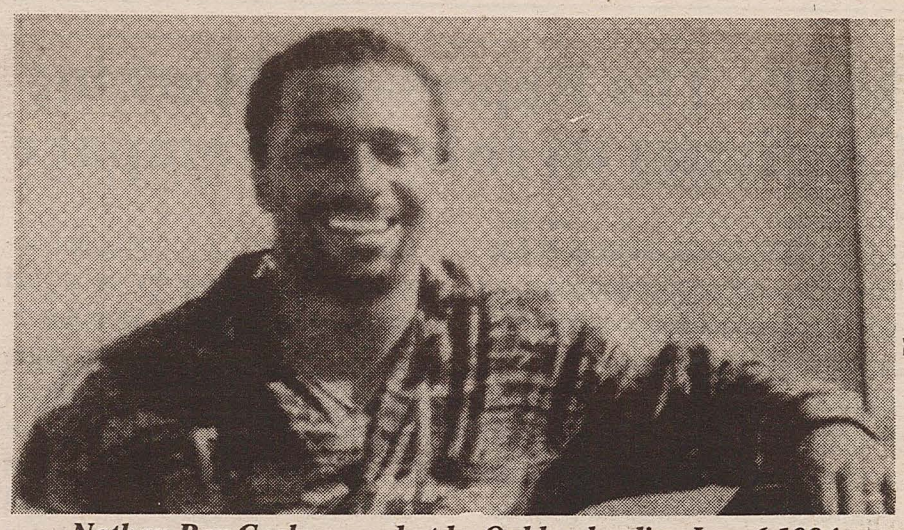


Photo Courtesy of the Cosby family

Nathan Roy Cosby was shot by Oakland police Jan, 6 1994

Thirty-three year old Nathan Roy Cosby was murdered January 6, 1994 by an Oakland police officer during an early morning raid of Cosby's residence. According to police reports, the early morning raid was staged to serve a search warrant, not on Nathan Cosby, who was not even a suspect of the police investigation, but on his estranged wife, who was not in the home.

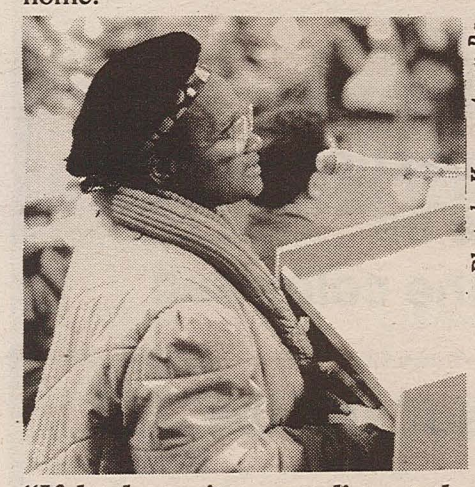


Photo by Kamau Amen-Ra

"If he knew it was police at the door, he would never pull a gun," said Cosby's mother.

Neighbors who witnessed the shooting recalled that "Police approached the house in force, carrying assault rifles and automatic weapons. They knocked on the door, then attempted to 'batter ram' it down."

According to official accounts, several officers attempted to go around back of the house, where they were met by Mr. Cosby's dogs. Police shot the dogs and then, when Cosby stuck his head out the window to see what was going on, "they (the police) shot him too," said one neighbor, who asked not to named. The police said that Cosby pointed a gun at one of the officers who had taken up position flanking the house, prompting another officer, Eric Belker, to shoot and kill Nathan Cosby.

Rev. Lorenzo Carlyle of Oakland Community Church of Christ, said neighbors told him that the police followed Nathan home that day from his job as night custodian at Roosevelt Jr. High School, waiting until he got out of his car and went into the house, before descending on the home. The family told *Commemorator* staff that once Cosby got home from work, "he would crash and almost nothing could wake him up."

Nathan's younger brother, Robert Cosby, stated that "he probably heard all the commotion, woke up out of a dead sleep, and looked out the window to find out what was going on. Yes, he probably kept a gun in the house, but it was just for that purpose, to defend his home and family. What would you do if you woke up to hear your dogs barking and someone beating down your front door?"

"If he knew it was the policeman at the door, he would never pull a gun," said Nathan's mother. "I raised all my kids to respect the police. He would never even have thought of pulling a gun on a policeman."

Police Commissioner Robert Samuels termed the death "a tragedy," and has announced an investigation of events leading to the killing, but as this article goes to press no changes in police policy or the manner in which warrants are sought or issued has been made or proposed.

"We want something done," Robert Cosby told the *Commemorator*. "We don't want Nathan's death to just be (the story of) another young black man killed by the police. We want his death to be the beginning of an effort to get the police to change their shooting policies before more innocent people are killed."

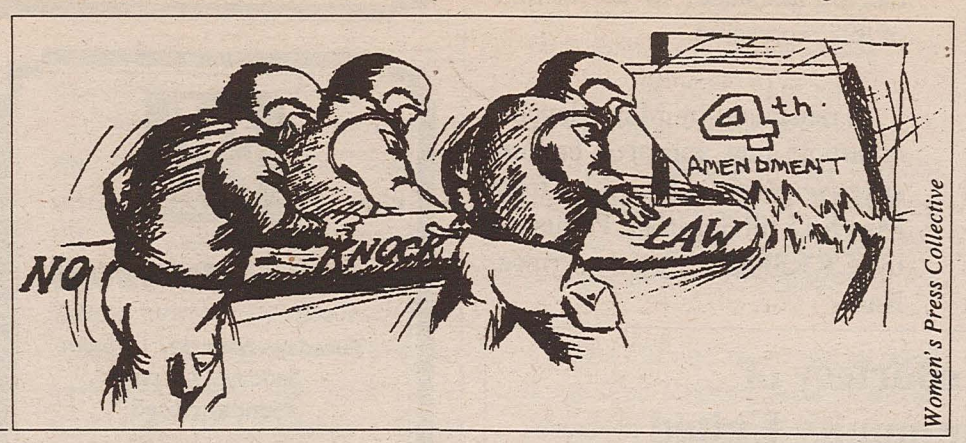
The nationwide record of such police "errors" also includes drug enforcement officers battering down the door of an eighty year old woman in the middle of the night — who kept a gun in her house and killed one officer thinking she was defending herself from burglars. The record also includes the recent break-in on a retired minister in Boston, who was not armed, and died of a heart attack, handcuffed on the floor of his apartment (details in article below). These and countless other "errors" were committed with warrants, according to standard procedures, on the word of "informants."

Citizens in low income and minority communities have increasingly branded these procedures, on which individual officers rely, as illegal, and a violation of 4th Amendment Constitutional rights. Fourth Amendment guarantees against "illegal search and seizure" are supposed to guarantee citizens protection in their homes from intrusion by anyone.

The officers who surrounded Cosby's home, and the officer who killed him, were by all accounts not in "hot pursuit." Though they had warrants to enter, they did not present Mr. Cosby or any of the citizens subjected to similar intrusions with warrants.

The Black Panther party addressed this question nearly 20 years ago. At a Chicago conference in the summer of 1975, the party laid out a clear plan of how the community could bring the police departments in their communities under control. (The details of the proposal are printed in full in the April 1993 issue of the *Commemorator*, page 11, Archives section, under the title, "Chicagoans Unite for Community Control of Police.")

Call or come by the *Commemorator* today to learn how to organize to make the police obey the law.



Women's Press Collective

SWAT Team Kills 75 Year Old Minister

An undercurrent of rage permeates Boston's low-income communities in the wake of the March 25 killing by police of an elderly minister in a low-income sector of the city of Dorchester.

Operating off a wrong tip from an informant, a team of police wearing fatigues, helmets and boots, sledge-hammered the front door of Reverend Accelynne Williams of Dorchester, Boston. Faced with police brandishing shotguns and 9-millimeter pistols, Williams ran into the bedroom, locking the door behind him. Police proceeded to break down the door, throw him to the ground, and kick and handcuff him as he died from a heart attack.

Rev. Williams, at 75 years of age, a highly educated, lifelong minister was dead within five minutes of the police invasion of his home. A Greek and Hebrew scholar, he was the first Black ordained Methodist minister in the Caribbean. Residing there since the 1920s, he worked and was revered, described by friends and acquaintances as law-abiding and peaceful. He retired to the United States to be with his daughter who attended school in Boston.

Elected and appointed officials subsequently instituted a cool-out policy by way of a public relations department to convince the population that this is merely an unfortunate accident for which the family of Mr. Williams can expect remuneration.

Continued on page 16

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Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed (*Part Two*)

Excerpt from *To Die for the People*

Point three of the original 10-point program of the Black Panther Party is "We want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALIST of our Black community." *That was our position in October 1966 and it is still our position.* We recognize that capitalism is no solution to the problems we face in our communities. Capitalist exploitation is one of the basic causes of our problem. It is the goal of the Black Panther Party to negate capitalism in our communities and in the oppressed communities throughout the world.

However, many people have offered the community Black capitalism as a solution to our problems. We recognize that people in the Black community have no general dislike for the concept of Black capitalism, but this is not because they are in love with capitalism. Not at all. The idea of Black capitalism has come to mean to many people Black control of another one of the institutions in the community. We see within this characteristic the seeds of the negation of Black capitalism and all capitalism in general. What we must do then is increase the positive qualities until they dominate the negative and therefore transform the situation.

In the past the Black Panther Party took a counterrevolutionary position with our blanket condemnation of Black capitalism. Our strategy should have been to analyze the positive and negative qualities of this phenomenon before making any condemnation. Even though we recognized, and correctly so, that capitalism is no solution or answer, we did not make a truly dialectical analysis of the situation.

We recognize that in order to bring the people to the level of consciousness where they would seize the time it would be necessary to serve their interests in survival by developing programs which would help them to meet their daily needs. For a long time we have had such programs, not only for survival, but for organizational purposes.

Now we not only have a breakfast program for school children, we have clothing programs, we have health clinics which provide free medical and dental services, we have programs for prisoners and their families, and we are opening clothing and shoe factories to provide for more of the needs of the community. Most recently we have begun a testing and research program on sickle-cell anemia, and we know that 98 percent of the victims of this disease are Black. To fail to combat this disease is to submit to genocide; to battle it is survival.

All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the community, but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution. We say that the survival program of the Black Panther Party is like the survival kit of a sailor stranded on a raft. It helps him to sustain himself until he can get completely out of that situation. So the survival programs are not answers or solutions, but they will help us to organize the community around a true analysis and understanding of their situation. When consciousness and understanding is raised to a high level then the community will seize the time and deliver themselves from the boot of their oppressors.

All our survival programs are free. We have never charged the community a dime to receive the things they need from any of our programs and we will not do so. We will not get caught up in a lot of embarrassing questions or paperwork which alienate the people. If they have a need, we will serve their needs and attempt to get them to understand the true reasons why they are in need, in such an incredibly rich land. Survival programs will always be operated without charge to those who need them and benefit by them.

In order to carry out such programs we have always needed money. In the past we received money from wealthy White philanthropists, humanitarians and heirs to the corporate monopolies. At the same time we were engaging in a blanket condemnation of the small, victimized Black capitalists found in our communities. This tactic was wrong, since we received the money for our survival programs from big White capitalists and we freely admit to that.

When we say that we see within Black capitalism the seeds of its own negation and the negation of all capitalism, we recognize that the small Black capitalist in our communities has the potential to contribute to the building of the machine which will serve the true interests of the people and end all exploitation. By increasing the positive qualities of the Black capitalist we may be able to bring about a non-antagonistic solution of his contradiction with the community, while at the same time heightening the oppressed community's contradiction with the large corporate capitalist empire.

This will intensify the antagonistic contradiction between the oppressed community and the empire; and by heightening that contradiction there will subsequently be a violent transformation of the corporate empire. We will do this through our survival programs which have the interest of the community at heart.

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United States Prisoners: Isolation to Lynching

By Leona Benton

The dramatic and unresolved rise in the number of inmates alleged to have "committed suicide" in Mississippi jails has struck new fears into family, friends and entire communities of the more than one million Americans now imprisoned in federal and state institutions across the United States. According to Mississippi prison authorities, 49 inmates have "committed suicide" inside Mississippi jails in circumstances deemed highly suspicious by relatives of the dead men and professional investigators alike; 27 of these were black men.

The U.S. has the largest prison population and the highest per capita imprisonment rate in the world, and over one-third of these prisoners are in a maximum security or control unit, the majority of those people of color. Inmates inside these prisons and jails are vulnerable to the worst kinds of abuse.

Lynching of Inmates Charged

Charges that inmates were being lynched inside jails were intensified after Andre Lemond Jones, a young black man 18 years old, was found hanging by the neck by shoelaces in the jail's shower stall. He was being held in Simpson County Jail, in Mendenhall, Mississippi, after being detained for apparently trumped up charges. This is only the most recent of a series of suspicious "suicides" primarily by young black men in Mississippi jails. In July, 1993, Cedric Walker, a 21 year old black man, was found hanging in a Mississippi jail with a note in his pocket saying that he believed his life was in danger in prison. That was in the state prison in Parchman, Mississippi.

Martin Wales, 20, was found dead in Madison County Jail in Canton, Mississippi, but, like Andre Jones, he was too tall to have hung himself in the place he was found.

Jones was in phone contact with his mother, Esther Jones-Quinn, president of the Jackson Mississippi chapter of the NAACP, until shortly before his body was found. "He had no reason to commit suicide," stated his step-father, Minister Quinn of the Nation of Islam. "He was planning to go to college the next day...to be oriented for his freshman year, to major in engineering. When we talked with him, he was concerned with when he was going to be released."

Justice Department Whitewash Contested

Dissatisfied with the U.S. Justice Department investigation that confirmed Jones' alleged suicide, his family hired Dr. James Bryant, a Chicago pathologist, to conduct another autopsy, and Dr. Bryant found that Mr. Jones definitely had been murdered, strangled and moved a few feet to where he had been found, with his feet on the ground.

The Black Panther Party built its free program of buses to transport families to local prisons to visit their loved ones because it understood the need to fight isolation of those in prison from their communities. The free bus program also helped reveal the first cases of sickle cell anemia in Walla Walla, Washington, which inspired the BPP's nationwide Sickle Cell Anemia Testing and Education program.

These alleged suicides are not *statistically* understandable either. In 1990, there were 289 suicides statewide in Mississippi, of which less than 16 percent were black people. In Mississippi prisons in the same year almost 50 percent of the suicides were of black people. *This does not compare reasonably with statistics from other states, where the percentages of suicides in and out of prison are more consistent.*

Inmates Isolated and Vulnerable

Efforts to publicize what physical evidence shows to be murders of inmates in these Mississippi jails highlight the nationwide isolation and victimization of incarcerated people, a population that is especially vulnerable to institutionalized racism and genocide, and to many other forms of abuse.

Investigations by Senator Robert Presley revealed frequent rape of female inmates by male Department of Corrections officers, threatening to file false disciplinary reports. No one has been prosecuted, even when female correctional officers provided testimony to specific incidents, including the son of the then-warden of California Institute for Women.

California's Pelican Bay State Prison is currently the subject of a civil rights prisoner class action lawsuit against the State of California, California Department of Corrections, and the Prison Warden. The suit charges that inmates are being tortured under cover of security precautions, and are more dehumanized upon release than when they were placed in custody.

Pelican Bay "Control" Units

Pelican Bay was opened in December 1989, cost $277.5 million, was designed to hold 2,080 prisoners, and is already dangerously overcrowded. It also contains a Security Housing Unit (SHU), the newest in an increasing number of "control units." Control units are prisons within a prison, which attempt to control prisoners through torture, using chains, sensory deprivation, isolation, claustrophobia, intensive surveillance, (often camera surveillance continues 24 hours a day) beatings (often while chained and/or stripped) and strip searches every day (even though these prisoners have no possible physical contact with anyone except guards).

The prisons of choice to many prison authorities, control units are supposed to be used only for the "worst of the worst," i.e., inmates who have hurt other prisoners or guards, but actually are frequently used to hold people seen as troublemakers for the prison administration, such as jailhouse lawyers and political activists and leaders.

Prisoners have no recourse to being sent to these control units, and can be put in for an indeterminate length of time. Frequently they are not told what the reasons are for their punishment, and when they are told, they are not allowed to challenge the allegations brought against them.

A control unit used for women (isolated specifically for their political affiliations rather than their danger to other inmates) in Lexington, Kentucky was shut down in 1989 under legal and public pressure from prisoner's rights groups, but since then a new and bigger one has opened in Marian, Florida.

"Pelican Bay State Prison is a maximum security facility," said Kanika Ajanaku, of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Mississippi Lynchings, "the prototype for which is an older [federal] facility at Marion, Illinois. It is the kind of lockdown that correctional authorities are increasingly using. The men who leave these places are less capable of functioning in society than they were, prior to incarceration." The Pelican Bay Information Project points out that, by injuring prisoners—which makes them more traumatized and so more brutal—SHU also "harms the poor and mostly minority communities to which prisoners return."

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Woman of the Year

Ruth Jones, widely respected in the Bay Area activist community, is a former supporter and organizer for the Black Panther seniors' program, Seniors Against a Fearful Environment (SAFE), a program that provided a Panther escort service for seniors. She also worked for and supported the BPP Free Breakfast Program for Children for many years. She was known as "Mother Jones" to party members and close friends.

Commemorator *Managing Editor, Gary Johnson and Ruth Jones discuss Commemorator topics of the past year.*

Photos by Jabari Adisa

Commemorator *honors Ruth Jones, Oakland's choice for Woman of the Year.with bouquet of flowers.*

With all the accolades from politicians and the rest,
we think the following statement best describes Ruth Jones' contribution to the struggle.

To the Woman who has the courage to:
Break the prison walls
for Angela Davis
Soledad Brothers
Black Panthers
San Quentin Six
Free the prisoners of the State
and the prisoners of the mind
Help feed the hungry children
share the burden of the weary
live in time with all people
celebrate change and liberation
Your Presence penetrates the darkest
hours and the greatest moments of peoples' lives
We Love You.

(quote from plaque awarded to Ruth Jones by Rev. Cecil Williams and Glide Memorial Church, at the Third Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award January 15, 1976)

Commemorator *Managing Editor reviewing one of Ruth's prized possessions, an award given to her by the Rev. Cecil Williams of the famed Glide Memorial Church of San Francisco.(Note: Its inscription appears above.)*

Ruth proudly displays her Woman of the Year award (given her by the California State Legislature), in front of the Satellite Senior Homes her home for 21 years. Ruth at 87 years old recently won a fight against efforts by the senior home to evict her, because she refused to pay for a mandatory meal program that began making her physically ill.

Health Care for the Poor: The Clinton Plan

Interview with Dr. Tolbert Small

Dr. SMALL: The situation in Oakland is similar to the one in the United States. We have 38 million people with no health insurance. We have a large amount of people who are under-insured. In the Oakland area we have six hospitals that have folded for financial reasons, San Leandro Memorial Hospital, Providence Hospital, Peralta hospital, Oakland Hospital, Merritt Hospital, Brookdale Hospital, now a small hospital in Richmond has become a psychiatric hospital. I think it is called Doctors Hospital or Sutter Hospital.

Yet the insurance companies are doing quite well. At one time, Blue Cross of California was bragging that they were sitting on a billion dollars. We see the chief executive officer of HEALTHNET on television saying "save the whales." What the CEO of HEALTHNET has failed to mention is that he and his colleagues have taken a $30,000 investment and are going to make 100 million on stock profit and HEALTHNET.

When HEALTHNET became non-profit and private, they got 50 percent of the stock. He himself has taken a $15 thousand investment and he is going to make $30 million on it. This money should be going to provide health care.

So what we have is a savings and loan type mentality running the insurance companies that control health care in the United States and there's kind of sleaze-bag influence in the way the insurance companies run health care in the United States.

First, let me give an example, 25 percent roughly of every health care dollar goes for administration by the insurance company. They say over 14 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) of the U.S. goes to health care. In Canada 9 percent (GNP) goes to health care. So, in other words, 3.5 percent of our GNP is going to the insurance companies just to administer health care.

President Clinton represents a lot of these people. AETNA Insurance was a large donor to the Democratic Convention. Clinton represents the insurance people. The insurance people's lobbyists, probably have about 30-40 percent of the people in Congress. The majority of the American people, 66-70 percent, have said they would like to have a Single-Payer system which would eliminate the 25 percent, money that insurance companies are getting for administering the health care system. However, Clinton does not have the willpower to buck the politicians and insurance people on that issue. That's why he has come up with managed care which will leave the insurance companies completely intact, to take their 25 percent cut of the pie off the top. They are part of the problem. It is like having a fox guard the hen house because the insurance companies are the ones who state, "if you have a pre-existing problem we will not insure you."

COMMEMORATOR: But Clinton has guaranteed that if you have a pre-existing problem you will not be turned away. Does that mean anything ?

DR. SMALL: Well, with his plan, he says he is going to eliminate that problem with the insurance companies, so he claims. Supposedly, they will not be able to cherry pick and only pick healthy people.

They will have to pick everyone, but the fact of the matter is, he is talking about taking money from Medicare and Medi-Cal (California's form of Medicaid program) to insure 38 million Americans who have no insurance, when Medicare is constantly being cut and underfunded, instead of going after 25

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Dr. Tolbert Small: The People's Physician

Dr. Tolbert J. Small provided medical service to the Black Panther Party for four years, served as Medical Director for Peoples' Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation for three years. He is a primary care physician and graduate of Highland General Hospital Internal Medicine Program. He has been best described as exemplifying the outlook of a primary care physician dedicated to serving the underserved and minority community.

Dr. Small was born in Mississippi and states his inspiration and drive to give back to his community came from his family. He is married to Anola Price Small and has three children who attended the Oakland Public Schools. Dr. Small has always been a community activist. As a medical student, he established a non-violent student program committed to registering voters, when voting was routinely denied to millions of Americans. Later, Dr. Small became involved in working with free medical clinics serving the poor and minority community.

In 1968, Dr. Small graduated from medical school at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. From 1968 to 1970, Dr. Small completed both his internship and residency at Highland Hospital. In 1975, he completed a second year residency in Internal Medicine; and from 1975 to 1976 completed a third year as Chief Medical Resident. Dr. Small is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and he served as volunteer faculty in Highland's Department of Internal Medicine.

Dr. Small's area of medical practice for the past twenty years has been with the medically underserved. He practiced at West Oakland Health Center for three years; served as a physician for three years at the Berkeley Free Clinic, worked as a part time emergency room physician at Highland for two years; and taught as Assistant Clinical Professor, University of California, San Francisco, Department of Medicine for six years.

In 1980, Dr. Small established the Harriet Tubman Clinic in Oakland. As one can ascertain, Dr. Small is strongly committed not only to providing primary medical care, but also to assuring access to those who would not otherwise receive care. He is a model of the type of physician most needed for real health care reform and equal access for all.

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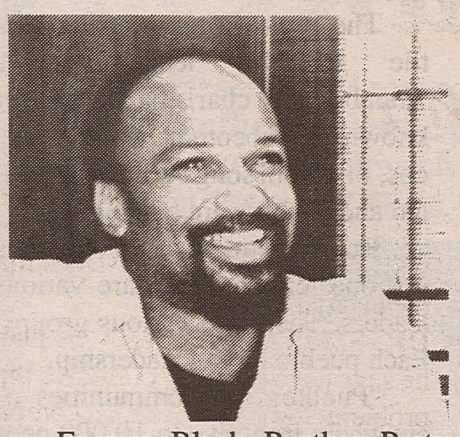
New Evidence Supports Geronimo's Release



Former Black Panther Party leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who has been imprisoned 22 years for a murder he didn't commit, may have new evidence supporting his innocence.

There exist affidavits from four people who say that two other men, now dead, confessed to them that they, not Geronimo, had killed Carolyn Olsen and wounded her husband in a 1968 robbery on a Santa Monica tennis court. There are also FBI memos saying the key witness against Pratt, a former sheriff's deputy-turned-Panther named Julius Butler, was an informant for the FBI before he accused Pratt of the Olsen killing.

Information about Butler's ties to the FBI was withheld from Pratt's defense lawyer and the jury on the case.

Recently U.S. Reps. Maxine Waters (D.-Los Angeles) and Don Edwards (D.-San Jose) have added their voices to those individuals and organizations that have called for a retrial, such as the human rights group Amnesty International. At least one of the jurors who convicted Pratt now says that the evidence withheld from the jury is very significant and he believes it would have exonerated Pratt in the 1972 murder trial.

Geronimo spent his first eight years in prison, in solitary confinement, which a jury later determined was illegal.

Appeals have been consistently denied, and attempts to get the case reopened have been unsuccessful. Last year, Geronimo was denied parole for the 12th time.

Los Angeles judges have routinely turned down motions for a new trial, setting aside in one-page rulings, detailed evidence that Pratt was 400 miles away at the time the crime occurred.

Although for many years testimony of former Panthers and evidence known to reside in FBI files was ignored by the Los Angeles District Attorney, current D.A. Gil Garcetti's office confirmed that it is reviewing the case after receiving a detailed report from lay minister Jim McClosky of New Jersey-based Centurion Ministries. McClosky's report adds to the mounting evidence of Pratt's innocence.

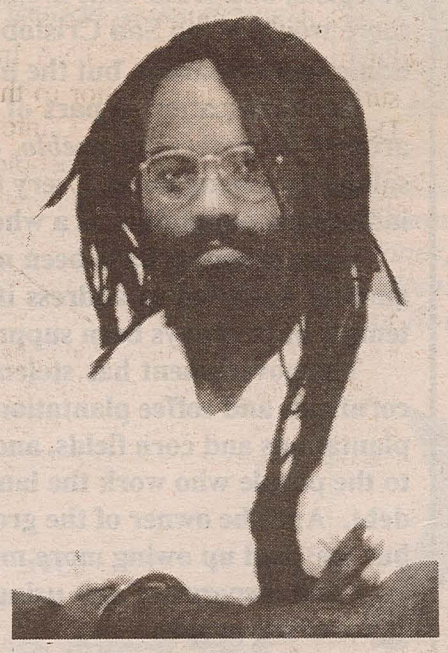
Centurion Ministries acts as a private detective agency in death penalty and life sentence cases. They gained national attention in 1992, when McCloskey's work freed Clarence Chance and Benny Powell, two Los Angeles men who were wrongfully convicted of the murder of a sheriff's deputy and spent 17 years behind bars. McCloskey also is credited with freeing 10 other wrongfully convicted people around the country.

Stuart Hanlon, a San Francisco lawyer who has represented Pratt for 15 years and who contacted McCloskey after learning of the Chance and Powell case, said McCloskey's findings further discredit the prosecution's main witness and provide other suspects for the killing.

Maybe this will finally get Geronimo out. Maybe not. What we must keep in mind, however, is what Dr. Huey P. Newton said about our political prisoners. "We can't free political prisoners, only the people can free political prisoners. And a people who are not free cannot free their prisoners...in order to free all political prisoners, free the people... All power to the people."

Cancellation of the Constitution

by Mumia Abu-Jamal



Mumia Abu-Jamal

"I have a right to nothing, which another has a right to take away..." — Thomas Jefferson, America's third president, as a slave owner, knew a great deal about "rights taken away," and the nation that he helped found, knows a great deal about it too.

Americans are taught, and the world is told, of the First Amendment of the Constitution, which supposedly "guarantees" fundamental rights to free exercise of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association.

So state history books, and law books numbering into the millions.

In truth, such rights are illusory.

The recent controversy involving the writer is an excellent case in point.

Hired by the prestigious *All Things Considered* program aired on NPR network to produce brief commentaries, the writer, who reported for *ATC* prior to his imprisonment, remarked to one supporter that he felt like he was returning home.

NPR, stung by an FOP (Fraternal Order of Police) hate campaign, mumbled something about "misgivings," and without informing the writer, canceled the airing of the commentaries.

The FOP, branding the writer as a "monster," and heaping abuse on the network, forced them to renege.

It is perhaps ironic that the FOP campaign began on May 13th, several days before the scheduled air date, for it marked nine years, to the day, after the Mother's Day-MOVE massacre of at least 11 MOVE babies, women and men in West Philadelphia, by the aerial bombing of MOVE's home in 1985.

Philadelphia police shot and killed fleeing MOVE women and children, forced others back into a burning building, and stood by while several blocks of West Philadelphia homes were consumed by flames.

Who are the real monsters?

The same FOP that incinerated, decapitated and dismembered people with judicial impunity, *they* call *me*, "monster!" Are they then angels?

What rights of "free speech" exist when it can be denied because the state objects to the speaker?

The same system that denied me the alleged "right" of self-representation, that intentionally denied me of my "right" to an impartial jury of my peers, that steered me to "trial" before a judge who was a life member of the FOP and known as a "prosecutor's dream"; that denied me the right to examine and/or cross-examine witnesses, and that went back over a decade to introduce evidence of my Black Panther Party membership and statements (said to be "protected" under the First Amendment's "guarantee" of "free" association and "free" speech) and used these to argue for a death sentence — these are the self-same forces that successfully censored me from the genteel listeners of NPR's *All Things* (that the police will allow) *Considered.*

They have demonstrated how the media is mastered by police power, and how the First Amendment, once again, is but a dead letter.

They have made my point — and I hope yours.

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NAFTA: New Mexican Revolution

Continued from page 1

says: 'National sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government.'"

The communiqué was issued in the name of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), named after the peasant revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, who led the agrarian revolution of 1910-1919.

The working people of Chiapas are among the poorest people in Latin America.

In the words of Louis Mariquen, a Mexican-American who lived in Chiapas for 10 years, "This was a land of indigenous peoples first, yet they don't even have a place to fall when they die.

"They have no stoves and no heating. Their survival is the land: logging, cutting wood for their basic needs.

"The government stopped these people from logging, but the politicians, or ex-government officials can go into the center of the jungle, which belongs to the community, and log.

"All the profits go to the rich, while the poor get deeper and deeper into debt. I've seen the hunger and poverty. A country as rich as Mexico shouldn't treat its people like that."

The EZLN is by all accounts a peasant army that has enlisted support from many other sectors of Mexican society.

According to Mariquen, "I would have to say, if its power comes from anywhere, it has to come from the core of indigenous landless people in Mexico.

"I believe that this group is joined by intellectuals of Mexico, by the scholars, probably writers, poets, ex-politicians, who are unhappy with the system.

"It's integrated with various other indigenous groups, which has never happened before.

"It's always been one group making a move, one way or another. I believe that some of the people in this movement are survivors of past attempts to get the Mexican government to deal appropriately with the people.

"For instance, around the time of the Vietnam war, 268 people were shot in the town square of Mexico City, and it didn't change anything. I believe some of them joined Lucio Cabañas in the '70s."

Lucio Cabañas became an outlaw after an uprising in the Mexican State of Guerrero near Acapulco where he was a school teacher in the 1970s.

According to natives of the area, he was blamed for a shootout during protests against a decision that all school children must wear uniforms and shoes. Most students were from poor families, without the kind of money to buy uniforms, or shoes.

Anger rose after reports that the school director was related to a clothing manufacturer. Cabañas was reported killed after two to five years of guerilla struggle, but some residents say that he's still alive.

Genarro Vasquez, who led struggles in the same area against poverty and for higher teacher salaries died in a "car accident" in the 1970s, but is widely believed to have been pushed off the road.

"This is totally an integrated movement," said Mariquen, "very well prepared, very well equipped, with a lot of knowledge about where they're at and what they're doing and what their ultimate goal is."

Their leadership is many

The press is now saying that the EZLN's leader is a "flamboyant, charismatic" officer known as subcommandante Marcos, of whom songs are being written and T-shirts are being made.

But Mariquen said, "There's not one leader. There are various leaders. There are various groups. Each pueblo has its leadership.

"Pueblos are communities of anywhere from five to 10,000 people, that have local police, post offices, telephone lines, and medical

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Forms of Oppression in Mexico and the U.S.

"Same shit, different flies"

The methods of oppression the poor face in Mexico are the same the poor face here.

For example, San Cristobal de las Casas has a higher income than other cities in the state of Chiapas. It's agricultural, with coffee plantations, jungle, and rivers. It has tourists, archeologists, anthropologists, and crafts that are all indigenous-related. Which means that without the indigenous people there would be no San Cristobal. This includes the Chamulan Indian community, Xochis, and others. Some speak Spanish, but the majority don't.

Communication is part of the problem between indigenous communities. Each group, centered around its governing *pueblo*, considers itself distinct from others. Historically, there hasn't been solidarity among them. Every time they have taken on an issue in the past, it wasn't dealt with by the indigenous population as a whole.

Some attempts have been made to bring the tribes together, but they have all failed. One group or another has tried to address its issues peacefully, trying to regain the indigenous land, but these attempts have always been suppressed by the military and the land owners,

The government has stolen this land from the people who have always used it. Once, land with cornfields and coffee plantations belonged to the indigenous people. Now, although there are still coffee plantations and corn fields, and indigenous people still work there, all the profits go to individuals, not to the people who work the land. They don't share in the wealth, they just get deeper and deeper into debt. And the owner of the grocery store is the same guy who owns the land, so he'll give them credit, but they end up owing more money than they make.

Land owners are also using the religious movements in this area, preying off the (imposed) ignorance of the people.

Let's say, for example, that you are an indigenous person who harvests the land owner's property and are also Roman Catholic. Let's say I have a store that sells booze, cigarettes, birth control, etc. You don't need any money, you just have to work for me, sign here, and I give you anything you want. If you change religion, say you become Evangelist, which means you can't drink, you have to be clean and conscientious. That means you no longer buy these things from my store, which does me no good at all. That means that I don't want you working for me anymore. You have to find a job somewhere else. So you have to go back to your old religion, because there's nowhere else to go. Economics move everything.

There's no difference between that and the slavery and sharecropping in the South of the U.S. or the farm workers of California or the coal miners of West Virginia.

The military is composed of indigenous people. The same as in the United States. Black Americans and Hispanics are the armed forces. It comes down to, we are the first to be killed. The problem is the same as what is happening to the poor here. To use a street term, it's the same shit, different flies. The oppression, the hunger, the poverty, it's the same!

The Mexican armed forces include many indigenous-descended people. "You can totally see the difference between officers and enlisted men," said Mariquen. "Over there you have Chamulas killing Chamulas. You have Xochis killing Xochis. You have Zapotecs, Miztecs, all these indigenous cultures from different parts of Mexico. All brown skinned, indigenous people, some of whom don't even know how to write, can barely speak Spanish, and are hired to slaughter one another. Their economic situation, keeping them poor, also feeds into their oppression by encouraging them to oppress their own." It goes back to being the perfect dictatorship. Mexico, like the U.S. calls itself a democracy, but many point out that in practice they are both dictatorships that use poverty and oppression to rule, to hold in place the rule of the few over the lives of the many.

All people who want to know how you can be part of a winning struggle for liberation here, in solidarity with the struggles in Chiapas and in all nations and communities, please call or write the *Commemorator* today.

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Economic Class Conflict, Race...

Continued from page 10

genocide was executed by the state against an indigenous and sovereign native people as a matter of official policy.

Ignatius Loyola (a Nostradamus associate) founded the Jesuit Order monastic system after which Hitler modeled his infamous Death Head S.S. training schools. The first California wine industry was built with Indian slave labor, and peonage administered in Jesuit-run missions under authority of the Spanish crown. Racialist and religious persecution and prejudice foreshadowed and justified this entire affair.

Race, Property, African Slavery, Civil War and Rights

Africans were portrayed as black savages, heathens, and subhumans by Article 1, Section 2 of the United States Constitution as three-fifths of a person (now amended by the Fourteenth Amendment). This formed the moral justification for brutal extraction of three centuries of forced labor, which remains uncompensated as you read this. The wealth and property amassed on the back of African slave labor formed the financial basis for the emergence of modern American capitalism, generating an estate of wealth and property so vast that the bloodiest war in American history was fought on American soil over its ownership, possession, and control. Again, racial prejudice and persecution walked hand in hand with economic class conflict, exploitaton and oppression.

The racialist, reactionary lynch law hysteria characterizing the American so-called Civil Rights movement had its origins in economic class conflict over the ownership, possession and control of economic property and estates which previously were exclusive birth rights of white skin privilege. When the segregationist spoke about preserving a way of life, this meant certain jobs (government civil service, professions, skilled trades) business opportunities, higher standards of living, and social accomodations were economic property estate owned exclusively by the white skin privileged.

The working class elements under the legalized segregation system were misled by the class whose comfort depends on exploiting all (white, red, yellow, black and brown) workers, to believe that white working class's economic, political and social interests lie in racialist suppression and persecution. History teaches that the opposite is true. Holding nonwhites in economic poverty undermined the interests of white labor. Poor nonwhites, who were systematically kept so poor by institutionalized racialism that they were working for less than what whites were being paid or demanding through labor action, were repeatedly used as scab labor, breaking strikes and bringing down the wage scale in the same way prison, workfare, and so-called job trainee low paid workers unwittingly do today.

The civil rights and global liberation struggles of the same era drew the same lesson from bitter historic experience that we see in the common understanding reached by Martin Luther King and El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X) at the instant of their deaths; as reflected in their analysis of what had to be done. The lesson bitterly learned is political independence cannot survive without economic independence. Economic independence must be based on owning, as property, the means to acquire the materials necessary to implement socio-economic programs, and enforce political will, as part of the process of uplifting the standard of living and quality of life of the oppressed.

Malcolm and Martin Rejected Racialist-Religious Chauvinism

Our brother Malcolm X observed that being able to sit at a racially integrated lunch counter was meaningless without the ability to buy the lunch. He was observing that there is no liberation from material oppression without owning the means to produce real economic power. His transition from the Nation of Islam to the Muslim Mosque Inc. reflects his understanding that organizing exclusively along racial lines isolated any movement so organized and was inherently divisive within the context of a class struggle framed in economic terms and willing to defend itself by any means necessary.

Brother Malcolm's move to form the Organization of African American Unity reflects the understanding that a movement which required belief in a specific religion as a condition of membership would not only isolate necessary potential support and allow an economic, political and social struggle to be falsely defined as religious conflict (as in Bosnia) but also leave itself open to divisive attack along religious lines.

Dr. King stated, before his murder, that one mistake of the movement was that America had not been required to pay an economic price for civil rights and that, through an economic working class struggle for radical redistribution of wealth, beginning

Continued on page 15

Health Care for the Poor

Continued from page 10

percent administrative fees that the insurance companies use.

Highland Hospital is the (Alameda) county hospital and provides health care for people with no insurance or people with no Medi-Cal. Their emergency room, as far as trauma goes, does an excellent job, but Highland is underfunded.

Let's get back to the 25 percent of funding that goes to administer our insurance.

If You "Under Treat," You Get A Kick-Back

We have 1,500 different insurance companies in the U.S. that insure health care. In Canada the administrative rate is about 3 percent of the total dollar, not 25 percent. We could take this money and use it to provide health care. For instance, we have not had primary care physicians opening offices, and staying in practice for more than a year in the Oakland area in the past five or six years. The reasons are economic. We have had six hospitals fold. Yet the insurance companies are swelling on mass products, and Clinton will let the insurance companies control it through managed care—HMOs, supposedly managed competition, but there is one large HMO in California, which actually reimburses money to doctors who save them money.

In other words although they don't use the word "undertreat" (they say "economically save money"), you actually get a refund in money from them for saving them money. Another HMO, which happens to be the largest HMO in California has traditionally given bonuses to their supervisors and people who retired or were laid off and not replaced. So I'm afraid what you might see with these HMOs who have greater emphasis on financial awards to physicians who save them money (you know that everyone wants to practice effective health care as cheaply as possible) [is]...that consumers [won't] know that they may be going to an HMO that rewards their physicians for perhaps using cheaper medications and saving money. I'm afraid that you will see a lot of that in "managed competition."

COMMEMORATOR: I want to show you one other thing, I received this from some people back in Tennessee. They have already put in a managed care plan based on a waiver they got from the Department of Health and Human Services. They're getting rid of Medicare and Medicaid in Tennessee and calling it TennCare or something like that. They're going on with their managed care program as if this thing has already been to Congress and it has not. The State of Oregon has passed a plan, a rationing plan, and Michigan and Wisconsin have also requested a waiver. These people in Tennessee seem to think that is a plot to put in the Clinton plan through the back door, so to speak. By each individual state getting waivers long before this thing even goes to Congress. By the time it goes to Congress, they will already have their plan for managed care intact and their Medicare obligations waived.

DR. SMALL: I understand that there are certain things that they will not do. What specifically are they waiving in Tennessee. Do you know?

COMMEMORATOR: They are waiving their federal Medicare obligations, and putting in their own plan.

DR. SMALL: Do you know what rights the citizens are losing under Medicare and Medicaid?

COMMEMORATOR: Poor people in Tennessee will no longer be eligible for the same amount, duration, and scope of services, uniformity of services, eligibility standards, or freedom of choice as was first established 30 years ago under Lyndon B. Johnson. Everyone is supposed

Continued on page 15

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When Justice is Incidental

Continued from page 4

The SDS by now had fragmented into several factions during the summer. Claiming that the Panthers were not the vanguard of the movement, Weatherman announced the "Days Of Rage," an action planned as a response to the so-called Chicago Seven trial. Fred Hampton opposed the demonstration as "Custeristic." He denounced the "Days Of Rage," predicting that the strategy would only backfire and the police would take revenge on the Panthers and the black community.

Fred's prediction came true, and sure enough, after the police arrested a few Weathermen for destroying the downtown lakefront district, they turned their ire on the black community. In the end, two black kids were dead at police hands.

The Weather Underground leaders were outraged by Fred's open criticism of the "Days Of Rage." They demanded a meeting with Fred. The meeting turned ugly and Fred booted the Weathermen out of the Chicago chapter. Eldridge Cleaver, Minister Of Information, attacked Fred in an essay sent to Oakland and published in the Black Panther Party newspaper. Cleaver wanted Fred to withdraw his statements, but Chairman Fred did not.

A Panther from the leadership, David Hilliard, the Chief of Staff, accompanied by Elaine Brown, a Panther from the L.A. chapter, went to Chicago to discipline Fred for his outspoken manner.

During this time, Bobby Seale, on trial along with the Chicago Seven, was bound and gagged on order of the judge as he tried to exert his Constitutional right to request counsel of his choice.

Two weeks after the trial started, a gun battle on the South Side of Chicago increased FBI focus on the Panthers. Two policemen and one former Panther were killed.

David Hilliard who frequently visited Chicago because of the trial of Bobby Seale, decided to take Fred Hampton to L.A. to meet and speak with members of the party's chapter there. Fred's trip to L.A. renewed the faith to the L.A. chapter. Fred's charismatic leadership restored the inner-strength of Panthers in L.A. He returned to Chicago after a successful visit.

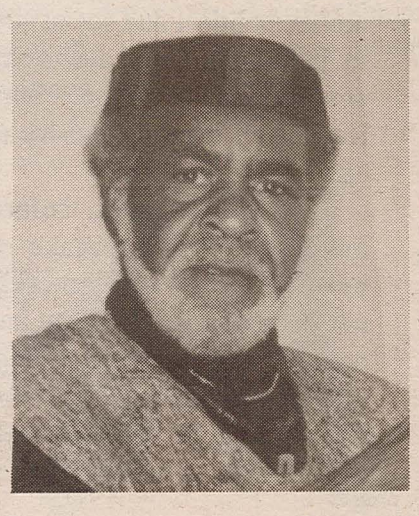
William O'Neal was a paid FBI informant who provided information that led to the murders of both Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. The shoot out on the South Side provoked a response from FBI agent Roy Mitchell, O'Neal's contact. Mitchell wanted more specific information on the Black Panther Party: weapons caches, explosives, who stayed where and who spent the night where. These were standard information requests, but Mitchell pressed O'Neal for more detail.

FBI agent Mitchell drew a floor plan of Hampton's apartment based on information provided by informant O'Neal.

Continued next issue

Artist on Display

Habari



I'm not much on writing. I never intended to be a writer. As an artist I didn't think you needed to be a writer or even to talk about your work or even to do lots of other tasks that goes along with your work. Not so. We, as black artists will have to do much more than just paint. We have to paint and also carry our message to the people and become a more visual and viable part of the black experience.
by Eugene E. White

Prisoners: Isolation to Lynching

Continued from page 8

Slavery within the prison system is legal, under the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which exempts "punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted" from its prohibition against "slavery or involuntary servitude." This is great motivation for the government and corporations to intensify efforts to build prisons, and to fill them, since under increasingly common laws re-legalizing private employment of prisoners, this expands the available cheap labor force.

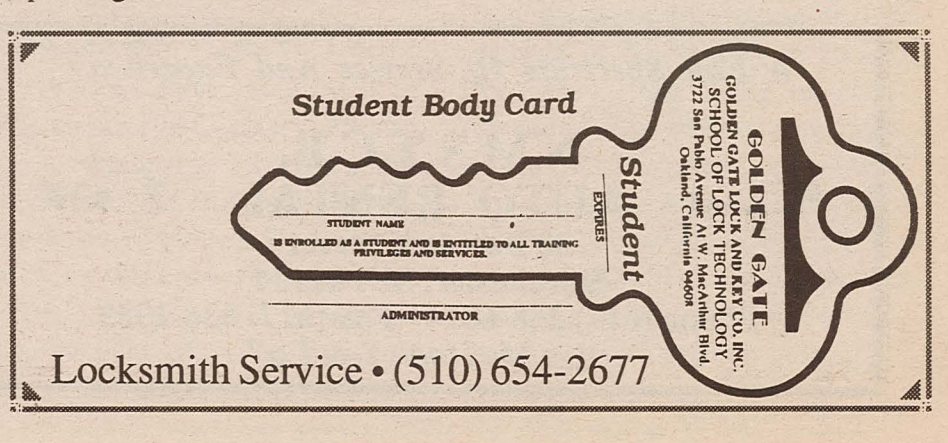
"The more terrorized the population is inside prison" said Ms. Ajanaku, "the better for the 'employers.' This is what is happening in California and across the country, right now. Part of manipulating these people, is keeping them separated from their communities on the outside of the prison, and fighting back against that isolation is an essential part of maintaining our communities."

Those who have had the experience of being randomly picked up, arrested on trumped-up charges, and harassed while incarcerated, know the prison system as one of the most dangerous and effective weapons in the state's war on people of color, both inside and outside the gates. Being arrested and abused are not signs of bad character.

"If [this] can happen to the son of an NAACP chapter president and a minister of the Nation of Islam," said Minister Quinn, "it can happen to anyone."

The prison population has exploded in size since the days of Black Panther Party organizing. Jails are overcrowded with people who have never been convicted of a crime, but cannot afford bail; the opportunity for abuse and likelihood of abuse has grown tremendously. This has prompted a call for revitalization of the Buses to Prisons program, and other self-help programs for prisoners and their families.

If you are interested in uniting those on the inside with the communities outside, to fight to change our common oppression, call the Ad Hoc Committee of Friends and Relatives of Prisoners in your area, or contact the *Commemorator*, P.O. Box 62, Oakland, CA 94609.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Health Care for the Poor

Continued from page 13

to have equal access to health care regardless of how much money they have or how old they are. Title Nineteen sets forth a federal guarantee that everyone has access to medical care.

DR. SMALL: The Clinton plan is going to allow the individual states to say how they are going to implement the plan. I think that this again points to the need for a national health care plan that will guarantee you will be treated whether you are driving through Tennessee, Mississippi, Michigan or wherever. There is probably going to be a single-payer plan on the ballot in 1995 in California, which I'm sure the insurance companies will go completely berserk spending billions and billions of dollars to defeat. Individual states can come up with their own managed care plan which will guarantee a sizable profit for the insurance companies which will be administering them. It's like, how does the cat protect the mouse? The people who traditionally make large profits in health care industries are now going to manage the remaining funds of the system. So, I think that you are right, each state can probably set up its own managed care system before they have passed one nationally.

COMMEMORATOR: It's very interesting what you mentioned there, because it does mean that if you drive through Tennessee and get sick, you are subject to a different set of rules and guidelines. So we are planning to point out that this thing is happening. While everyone is in the town hall

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Economic Class Conflict, Race...

Continued from page 13

with the "Poor Man's Campaign," America would be forced to pay billions. He also took an internationalist economic and political position by calling for an end to an unjust and imperialist war. He was attempting to lead all races and religions in an economic class struggle when he died.

His position was beginning to evolve to appear very much like a mature and evolved Malcolm X. He received the same death penalty. Who pulled the trigger in each instance is not clear. The fact that the ruling class successfully participated in conspiracy to instigate murder by public lynching is, however, crystal clear.

Official Raid Version: More Questions Than Answers

We now see the same racialist-religious hysteria methodology come full circle in the media firestorm that preceded and followed the police raid on the Nation of Islam's Muhammad's Mosque at 2033 Fifth Avenue in Harlem. The New York City Police Department employees, whom we are told received the original 911 call allegedly claiming that there was an armed robbery in progress and dispatched officers to the Mosque, are now under internal departmental sanction. The Police Commissioner has officially admitted that the authenticity of the alleged 911 call was highly questionable at best.

No adequate explanation is forthcoming as to why the computer generated notice (allegedly) was never relayed that the location for the alleged robbery, the Mosque, was a sensitive location, requiring certain official clearances, contact and approach procedures prior to entry. Although it is common knowledge that the NYPD's intelligence division, and the FBI, have been monitoring NOI activity even prior to Malcolm X's public lynching, the police claim they didn't know the location was a Mosque.

The previously mentioned NYPD's sensitive location policy originated from a similar raid on the NOI's 116th Street Mosque, April 14, 1972. The NOI member charged with disarming and murdering officer Phillip Cardillo during that incident was acquitted of murder. A second trial for assault ended in a mistrial and the charges were eventually dropped.

Continued next issue

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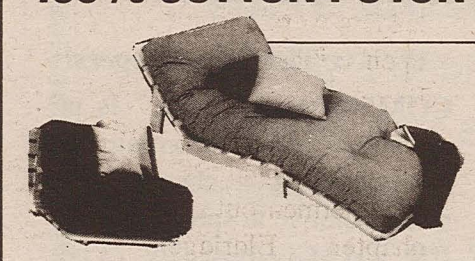

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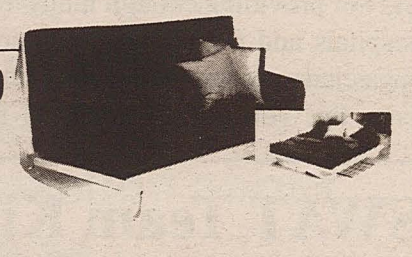

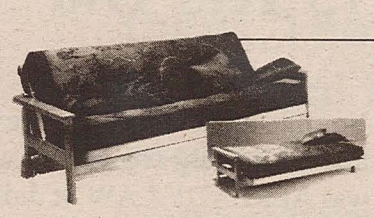

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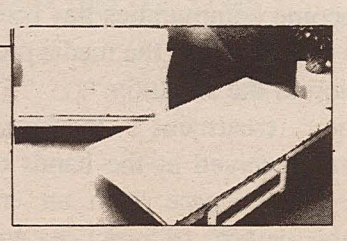

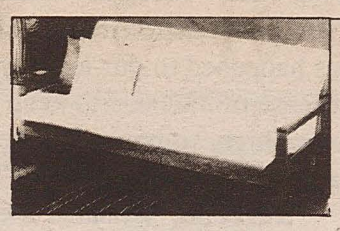

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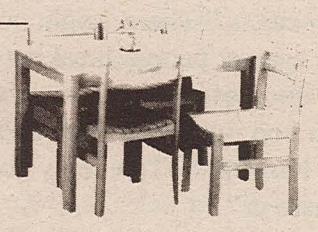

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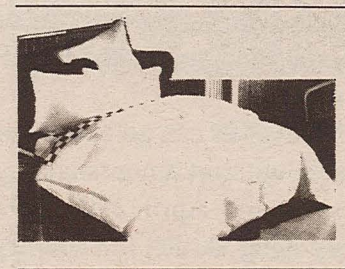

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Health Care for the Poor

Continued from page 15

meetings, outside the meetings Donna Shalala is waiving Medicare obligations for states, nationwide. It is interesting that she would do that, knowing that there is a national plan on the way to Congress.

"Managed competition" and "managed health care," is this the same thing?

DR. SMALL: The "managed care" is what the HMO is, but too often what we have is insurance companies managing the money and not providing enough funds for hospitals and for the primary care physicians to provide adequate care. So, you have a situation in which hospitals fold and situations where physicians don't go into primary care medicine. That is the situation we have here in Oakland and it is similar to the situation in most of the major cities in the United States.

We Are The Gate-Keepers!

COMMEMORATOR: Is primary care just becoming cost prohibitive, is it cheaper, is it more lucrative to specialize?

DR. SMALL: Basically, 15 percent of medical graduates go into primary care. Primary care is preventive medicine. We are "gate keepers!" We see the patients initially and refer them to specialists. In Canada, 50 percent of doctors go into primary care. But we have a situation in the United States where we have the tail wagging the donkey, rather than the head of the donkey wagging the tail. Primary care should actually be playing a leadership role but 1) they make less money financially, 2) they are over-worked and work longer hours. Physicians are not going into medical school because they have a deficiency in their IQ. They say, "why should I become a primary care doctor and be underpaid when I can become a specialist and learn a few procedures well, and make two or three times more money." See, that's part of the problem with the American health care system.

The HMOs made the primary provider the "gate keeper." They have basically designed a program of referrals where, in order for us to refer someone to another physician, we have to either fill out a form, or we frequently get phone calls for specialists saying this physician is out of the office, we do referrals, make phone calls, you get a tape recorder, get put on hold, etc. At our office we have had to hire someone just to handle the phone calls and referrals from the HMOs. So we have a situation in which American medical students are not going into primary care.

Of course, the fact of the matter is, if we insured everyone in the United States we would not have enough primary care doctors to take care of them. There would have to be a rearrangement of the entire system so that the tail would no longer wag the head, we would have people going into primary care, but our system is so top heavy and specialized that if everyone in Oakland were insured there would not be enough primary care physicians to take care of them.

HMOs are Discount Healthcare for the Middle-class

COMMEMORATOR: So what happens to the low income mother or child or person who is seeking health care? Primary care is what's needed but the situation is designed for economic profit.

DR. SMALL: They cannot even get into an HMO, because the HMO is discount health care for middle class people. Like, if you work for University of California at Berkeley, you join HMOs. It is so much of a redundancy, that when you turn on the TV, you see HEALTHNET, LIFE GUARD, AETNA, all advertising as if they have something different to say. They all use the same physicians, the same health care packages, they all use the same HMOs, they all use the same IPA physicians. Yet they spend millions of dollars advertising.

Continued next issue

SWAT Team Kills 75 Year Old

Continued from page 6

Wayne Singletary organizing with the local service workers association said, "The real issue for low-income communities has been totally submerged in the media presentation of the situation."

The treatment Reverend Williams received at the hands of police has become such an entrenched pattern of practice; and recourse under the law virtually nonexistent to the point where low-income people in Roxbury who came together to meet and talk during the height of the sensationalist and racist hue and cry surrounding what became known as, "the Charles Stewart case" commented — "There ought to be a law against people breaking down the door of your house, grabbing your son out of his bed, and beating him up." The reply follows, "There is."

The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution was enacted to secure the people of this country against the government's search and seizure of ther persons, homes, papers, and effects. The Fourteenth Amendent to the Constitution was passed to protect people of this country from discrimination and involuntary servitude. The 14th Amendment has enforcement apparatus with both civil and criminal penalties. The Civil Rights movement voiced the needs, hopes and aspirations for political parity of Black Americans to pass the 1964 Voting Rights Act. However, that act merely recognized what was ALREADY LAW. It did not eliminate what is, in fact, second class citizenship.

"Government officials have trampled on the Fourth Amendment right to remain secure in your person, papers and effects," stated Joshua Mason, a 'Know Your Law' sessions volunteer. "This police action indicates what has happened to our legal system because of the need to keep drug prices high, so powerful interests can make a profit off them."

"Reverend Williams died of the excesses of the war on drugs," announced a neighbor. "It was out and out murder." Even while she spoke, friends and fellow Dorchester residents were putting up signs to announce meetings under the auspices of Coalition of Concerned Legal Professionals, at the offices of the nearby Eastern Service Workers Association at 8 Newcomb Street. "We can't permit this to continue. Our people, innocent people like Reverend Williams, are victimized daily by lying or mistaken informants and police seeking headlines, promotions or additional funding," said a CCLP volunteer.

"None of us can go about our business without understanding that since the April 29th 1992 Rodney King verdict the country has changed," said Singletary. The protests which followed represented the knowledge that minorities and the poor don't have justice in this country.

False was the notion that economic policy could continue to endlessly deprive our cities and poor communities without something blowing up. Hundreds of thousands protested across the nation taking up the chant, "No justice, no peace." The population, given the message that recourse could simply be gained in the streets responded to en riots by declaring martial l L.A. and other locations thr out the country. More 18,000 people were arrest L.A. alone. After five days oting, police went door to for days searching homes without warrants. Reports of front yard arrests by those with no prior charges threw civil rights out the window.

The fact is, there are at least three such Rodney King beatings sustained in low-income communities every night.

From reports, "...officers clearly knew nothing about the neighborhood," said Israel Houck, a resident of the neighborhood. "They say they're trying to help, but investigations or a cash settlement will not bring Reverend Williams back nor force the police to obey the law. That's why we're organizing."

All those interested in finding out more, and in helping to change the situation, call CCLP at 617-427-9117. Ask for Charles.

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Join New War Against Poverty

Continued from page 1

trol of its destiny by taking control of the things it needs to determine its destiny: land, food, housing, income, health care — all those things that provide a measure of security in our lives.

Neighborhoods organize themselves

Inspired by the history of innovative survival programs of the BPP and the present-day approach of new types of labor organizations such as mutual benefit associations of low-paid workers, this fight against poverty exhorts neighborhood residents to organize themselves. It teaches them how to utilize what resources they have to create community organizations which can oversee health, safety and labor issues of common concern, to organize responsible childcare and collect and distribute food, clothing and other basic resources in the low income community.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Readers are strongly urged to read *Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed* excerpted from Dr. Huey P. Newton's writings in *To Die For The People* as an adjunct to this article. Part Two of *Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed* appears on Page 7 in this issue. Also the CCBPP Statement of Purpose and the Black Panther Party 10-Point program on Page 14. Readers interested in learning more should write the *Commemorator* for the name and address of the nearest local study group coordinator. Be sure to send your full name and address, special areas of interest and what, if any, your connection with the original Black Panther Party was.

Over the long term, those organizations are pulled into a united community thrusting toward liberation from social and economic oppression.

Community membership program brings customers and businesses together

In January, the *Commemorator*, along with local community organizers, took an aspect of this program to small businesses based in the low income communities of West Oakland, one of the most devastated and neglected neighborhoods in the city of Oakland. When asked to join this new war on poverty, they agreed, partly because it just makes common sense, as we are the customers who shop these local businesses and this fundamentally ties our fates together.

At present, one organization, the Western Service Workers Association, has undertaken a determined door-to-door (and, indeed, store-to-store) campaign in West Oakland to inform neighborhood residents and businesses of the merits of such a program. At last report, several merchants had agreed to introduce a means of discounting their merchandise to residents who made an effort to do the majority of their shopping at their stores. The residents would present the identification card of the organization to which they belong, entitling them to a discount with the participating business.

It is hoped that by jumpstarting the residents of a community in this manner, the community will begin to experience a type of revitalization that will gradually build upon itself, building pride within the neighborhood and encouraging new life blood, in the form of new businesses and new settlements.

At a minimum, we would contain a portion of the economic decline of our neighborhoods while we seek, the "freedom...[and] power to determine the destiny of our Black and oppressed communities ...[and] an end to the robbery by the capitalist of our Black and oppressed communities."

several merchants had agreed to ... discounting their merchandise to residents

Commemorator interviews merchants

The *Commemorator* was interested in the views of the merchants asked to participate in the program. In the interviews that follow, we explore their thoughts about the neighborhood in which they trade, their problems and hopes. In addition, we present an interview with Clovis Bordeaux, operations manager of Western Service Workers Association, in which he discusses the Association's role in helping to empower West Oakland.

United Market is owned by Mosiad, from Yemen, and is located in West Oakland, across from one of the larger projects in the city. Three or four relatives from Yemen also work in the store. We spoke to one of them, Mike, as Mosiad was out.

Photo by Chris Brown

Sam at Money Market in West Oakland offers a discount to members of local self-help association

"The economy is bad and everybody has their own problems," Mike agreed. "At Safeway the prices are too high. They only put, like, signs [advertising cheap prices], something like that, but the veal, everything else is high."

Mike appreciated the idea of everyone having a membership card shopping at United Market instead of larger stores outside the neighborhood, in consideration of a 10 percent discount off their purchases.

"Yes," Mike said, he could do that. "No problem."

The whole deal depends on talking to people all over the neighborhood, to say, "Stop taking your money out of the community. Keep your money here. There are stores already here; they just need help." With this kind of help, little stores could have better variety, but it would require that store owners and customers in the neighborhood work together.

The process starts with a membership card. The owner of the card agrees to participate by buying things they need in the local community.

Stop taking your money out of the community. Keep your money here.

Money Market is a small grocery store in West Oakland, owned by Sam, originally from Yemen, who lives behind his store. He's been in the U.S. three years, and now has three to four young men from Yemen working in the small market with him.

Asked about how much business he is getting, Sam replied, "A lot of people around here are on welfare. Sometimes they have money, sometimes they don't. Sometimes they steal, they give me problems, headaches and fight in the store. But what can you do? We want to work. We don't want to go on welfare or something.

"Business is too much of a headache, and some people, they come up short, the money is short all the time. What can you do? They are your customers. You let them go with a quarter. I support everybody, I am supporting everybody down here, but sometimes they steal from me. We can do nothing."

Like most residents of low income neighborhoods, he is concerned that so many have no way to make a living except by selling drugs, and nothing to do with their lives. "It's crazy, I tell everybody, the stuff is crazy, no good. It's poison, no good. I sell groceries. I sell beer only, not too much."

He was also glad to hear that there is a program to sign up everyone in the community, tell them to shop at participating stores in the community, and help it to grow. If people from a participating organization came to his store, he would give them a 10 percent discount on what they buy. For instance, if someone buys $5.00 of merchandise, they can show their card and pay $4.50 instead.

"Okay! That's not much, it's okay. I believe you, yeah, that's good. Sure, no problem, thank you!"

Nadia Tazi is the owner of Bernon Market in Oakland. She has been in the same neighborhood for 14 years, at Pearl and Harrison Streets, where she lives in an apartment above her store. We asked her, "How is business?"

"It's not as good as it used to be. I really don't know why. I think it's the recession. People don't want to go to the corner store anymore. They go to Safeway perhaps, to save a few cents. I don't make as much money as before.

"It's always the same problem. It depends on people. You had some people who moved out of the neighborhood. They didn't mind shopping at the corner store, and the people who moved in don't shop here that much. We always

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CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten Point Program which was written in 1966 by the Black Panther Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten Point Program outlined the goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working communities of the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is Reactionary Intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (that of the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation).

CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party 10-Point Program

WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM. WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

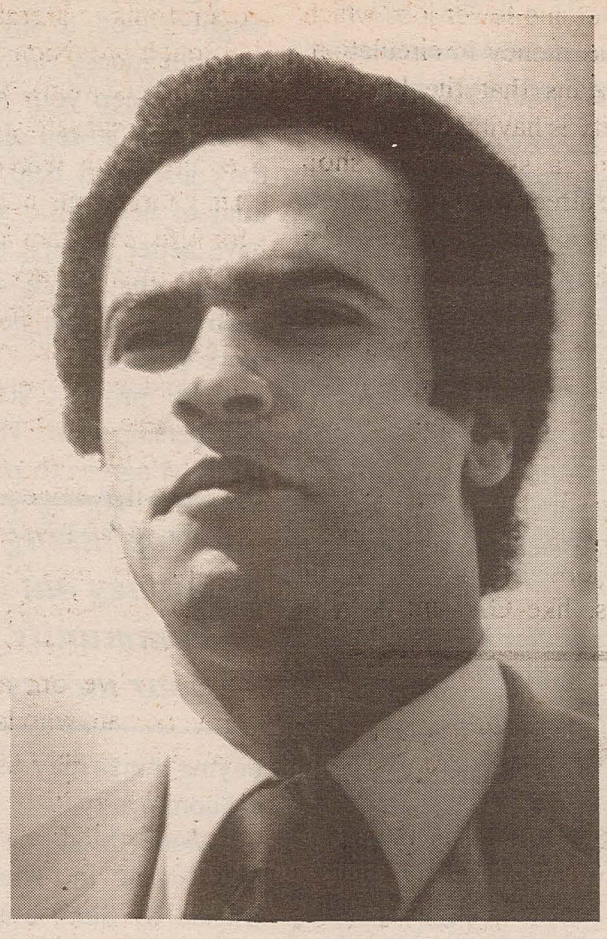
5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about because of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it's our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts that exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U.S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U.S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U.S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U.S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U.S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons are brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, during human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands that have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Join New War Against Poverty

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try to put things on sale, and try to look around and have the lowest prices in the neighborhood, but still have a problem."

She also recounted problems with drug dealing, "right at the front door. I have complaints from a lot of customers and I received even written letters about it from different customers. Some of them, I guess, don't come back any more, especially women after six when it gets dark. I don't know if the police are getting busier or they don't care no more.

"To be honest with you, some of the customers blame the drug dealing on the liquor store, and I don't think we're here to support the drug dealers. We're here to take care of our business, and we're here to keep our customers or have some more customers. We're hardworking people that, you know, if we had any help from the neighborhood too, that might solve the problem."

One of the biggest problems for a small business, she said, is keeping everything in stock that customers come in looking for. "When a customer comes in and he asks you for something, you must have it because, you know, he might want something and some other things, and if he doesn't find that one item he's going to walk out and go somewhere else and get everything at once."

Customers who come in and find what they are looking for generally come back, she said, but if a customer can't find what they want, even one time, they don't come back anymore. She goes to the wholesale markets every one or two days to "have the shop full for everybody, because you don't want to lose them. We're doing all we can to please our customers. They don't understand we're in the same situation."

Clovis Bordeaux, Operations Manager of the Bay Area (Calif.) organizing drive of Western Service Workers Association, spoke to us of Oakland's past and its future.

BORDEAUX: I would characterize West Oakland as destitute. There's just hardly anyone here. As a matter of fact, the Oakland police are saying that the crime rate is down. I would say it is in the doldrums, as opposed to being a ghetto, because even in a ghetto you can have some type of commerce. That doesn't exist in West Oakland.

A couple of things have happened. One was the building of the Post Office, which wiped out an entire neighborhood. West Oakland, especially on 7th Street, used to have banks, used to have a movie theater, coffee shops; this building (that WSWA rents) used to be a clothing store. Because of the war effort and the proximity of the military base there was a lot of activity in the 1940s. Then slowly but surely that died down. Then BART added to the problem; then the building of the Cypress Freeway divided what was left of West Oakland. And all the while there were fewer and fewer jobs which means less money in circulation, which means that the business community is having a hard time. Last year, a shoe repair shop down the street went out of business. Then a liquor store left. The earthquake knocked a lot of businesses out, too, and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) never came through with the promised financial recovery.

The attitude of the people on the street is just day-to-day, looking for jobs. The government programs, like GA and AFDC, are constantly being cut back. I mean, people may not consciously perceive it as the doldrums, but the definition of that word is that there is no activity.

There's no economic life, no cultural life, or understanding of history, unlike the Black ghettos of the old days. So, basically, people are just surviving, and only barely surviving.

Whenever we see government redevelopment programs, we see "regentrification." That means they tear down low income housing and put in condos for upper income folks. They pulled this stuff in Atlantic City, New Jersey, when they put up those casinos. They did a similar thing in San Francisco, when they said they would eliminate poverty by the year 2000, and they just made it so that poor people aren't able to live there. So the San Francisco poor population is down 9 percent and the Berkeley poor population is up 12 percent.

We understand very clearly that it's not a local problem, it's a county, city, state and federal problem. But we have to start somewhere, and this is as good a place as any. Small businesses themselves are under attack by the same forces that oppress us. Large corporations, in cahoots with local government, come in to our communities and set up operations literally tax-free (through provisions of Enterprise Zone legislation), with all kinds of health and safety codes and tax requirements waived for them. They target our poorest workers for hire, pay them a subminimum wage, often a wage subsidized by the city as a "training wage," and, because they (the owners) do not live and work here, they don't shop here, eat here. Their kids don't go to school here. In short, because they have no connection, no personal investment in our community, they suck the life out of our communities and put nothing back. The wages are too small to live on, and the small businessman, who is a part of our community, can't compete and is forced out of business.

In the short term, it's necessary for people to survive. So we have our eleven-point benefit program to improve the means of survival. But, through the process of bringing together resources, we can organize the community toward addressing the source of our problems, start discussing who and what is responsible for these programs.

In the meantime, it is clear that if the business community is facing a situation where 25 percent of the population is below the poverty level in Oakland, then that's one quarter of your potential clientele that cannot afford to spend money at your business.

We contact the business community and tell them that they need to support this organizing drive, because their interests are tied to people bettering their living and working conditions. That means that we have to do a lot of talking, a lot of explaining to a broad cross-section of the community. So we talk to businesses; we go on business canvasses. We can be seen almost anywhere in the community talking to people face-to-face.

Many small businesses are facing eviction because they can't afford to keep prices lower than the big chain stores. They're literally about ready to cut and run.

The first thing we try to do is get their agreement that wherever they go they're going to find the same problems. That there really is no geographic solution to this world economic crisis, this national depression that we're facing. That whether you go to Detroit, San Francisco, L.A. or New York there will be similar problems.

Sure, you want to locate your business and your family in a nice neighborhood, but this country, this state and certainly this city, is running out of nice neighborhoods. You see, *this* once was a "nice neighborhood" before it was economically raped and pillaged by forces in the community, businessmen and politicians, who didn't have this community's interest at heart. Next I look them straight in the eye, tell them, "Don't run, let's stop running, stay here and join with us, and help make this one of those 'nice communities' again. It *can* be done."

Then I get material with them. I say, "Okay, as a businessman you need more clients and we can help you there, but our members need to save money." I would say, "If we can guarantee you 10, 50 or 100 new customers a month, would you give a discount?"

Through our membership, we would publicize the arrangement, say, "Listen, go out to Sowande's Shoes and you'll get a 10 percent discount. Just show your red membership card." We would publicize it on our bulletin board in our office, also on our daily door-to-door canvasses, and in our monthly newsletter, and in our daily phoning and outreach. We would encourage our membership to patronize the businesses that support us.

What we see is that instead of coming from the top down, the real solution must come from the bottom up. And that's what makes community organizing the most vital part of our survival as a people. It builds a base of power among ourselves with the resources that we currently possess.

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New Mexican Revolution

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facilities.

"Some have high schools and access to universities. They're small cities. Some have small landing strips and hospitals. They're run by the government. Every town in Mexico is run by the government; they have the local police, and judiciary or state police, and federal or national police and the military.

"For instance, in Las Margaritas, you have your group of the EZLN, in Altamirano, you have your group of the EZLN. They're all groups that have communications, intelligence, and training facilities.

"This is an army, a well organized army; this is not just people who got together. These people know what they're doing. You don't walk through military stations just because you're lucky.

"You know this area and the people. These people (the Zapatistas) took five to six pueblos of Mexico, a country that's totally militarized, where you have military bases just about everywhere."

Signs of U.S. involvement

Signs of United States government involvement in helping the Mexican government to destroy this revolutionary movement have already begun to appear.

"I personally witnessed American military in Mexico in combat," said Mariquen. Mariquen described being arrested and detained in a Mexican Military base in the state of Chiapas during a military sweep, just after the Zapatista uprising, which took into custody as suspect anyone who spoke more than one language and/or looked to be of the indigenous population. "After I was arrested, after they checked me out, they had me translate labels on American military rations that had just arrived from the United States for the Mexican military personnel. Thousands of rations, which hungry people in the U.S. could use more than the Mexican government. So here I am, detained, and they're asking me to translate what these foods are, and how to fix them. That was my first notion of American intervention.

"My second notion was weaponry that was coming in. The weaponry was M-16s. Mexico doesn't make M-16s, France doesn't either. Russia doesn't make them. I'm not ignorant about this. So they had all this weaponry coming in, brand new tanks, communication systems. And there were a lot of 'white boys,' white American personnel, with "Prensa" ("Press") stickers, walking around the military compounds, when no other press people can even get within a mile of this compound, but here are all these North American personnel walking around."

Reports from the area include an account that the Zapatistas for National Liberation stole 1,000 tons of dynamite from PEMEX, the Mexican petroleum company, which was doing surveys in the Chiapas area to find new oil reserves. The research team was kidnapped by the EZLN and then let go. The EZLN kept the dynamite.

"According to a report in an international paper," said Mariquen "Mexico is about to become very powerful because of its oil reserves, which will make the oil boom of the 70s and 80s look like child's play. So then I start wondering if this could be one big conspiracy for U.S. intervention. Of course this is totally speculation, personal ideas."

The U.S. consumes the most crude oil in the world. We also have large international investments in Mexican agriculture, tourism, hotels, and airlines.

This is not the first time the poor has become fed up in Mexico and it is not the first time that the U.S. government has intervened in Mexicans' disputes with their government, and always they intervene on the side of the government against the Mexican people' s oppressed communities. Louis, like the *Commemorator*, supports poor and working communities' efforts to raise their living standards by any means necessary. But we both realize that success for the Zapatistas is a long way off since U.S. and possible UN intervention can be called on by the wealthy communities around the world to defeat the uprisings of the poor, while poor communities are criticized and prohibited from calling on help from poor communities of the U.S. and Internationally to assist them in their struggle for liberation from poverty and oppression. Dr. Huey P. Newton pointed out years ago, that until intercommunalism unites poor communities around the world in their common struggles against poverty and oppression, those communities will be no match for an internationally organized oppressor.

Learn more about the concept of intercommunalism and how you can build it here and now. Contact the *Commemorator* today!

This story is about an oppressed community which is now at war with its despotic government. The people of this poor and oppressed community have endured their suffering for hundreds of years, and on January 1, 1994, they said "enough is enough" and men, women and children joined together and organized themselves into a political, economic and military force dedicated to removing the foot of the oppressive government they have endured on their backs so long, and we wish them well.

Malcolm X once said that the thing he dislikes most about his people is that they have learned to tolerate tremendous amounts of suffering. This is true of oppressed communities in general. From the Black Panther Party 10 point program, Point 10, a paraphrase from the Declaration of Independence, where it found new life, "...Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light or transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evince a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security."

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